
دفع الشبهات عن علم أعلم المخلوقات

Dispelling False Notions About the Knowledge of
the Most Learned of Creation

Part 1. The Qur'an is an Explanation of All Things for the Noble Prophet
(Allah give him peace and blessings)

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The Qur'an is an Explanation of All Things for the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings)

All praise is for Allah Almighty. May endless peace and blessings be upon our Beloved Prophet Muhammad, upon his Kin, Companions and those who follow in their footsteps.

To Proceed:

By the grace of Allah Almighty my recent paper on the subject of the vastness of Prophetic Knowledge titled “Knowledge of the Unseen Theology: Arguments on the Scope of Prophetic Knowledge” was followed by a large reading community with more than two thousand readers in the first month alone on www.scholarsink.wordpress.com. Among its readers were some Deobandis, followers of the Wahaahbi influenced school of Deoband in India, who seemingly studied parts of it only in order to issue a partisan based refutation. What they in fact produced was a list of their mistaken notions but nevertheless they offered interesting insights into the various scholarly texts on the subject which have always been used by Deobandi scholarly elders and now by the new generation of English speaking Deobandis here in the West. With the Divine aid of Allah Most Sublime, I have produced replies to their mistaken notions demonstrating that the position of the distinguished Sunni Maturidi-Hanafi jurist and Muhaddith, Imam Ahmad Raza Khan on that of the knowledge of our Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) was not only sound but conformed completely to the classical texts and classical scholarly edicts.

My aim is to reply to all of our Deobandi opponent's major objections in three parts and in this particular part I offer my first reply to their objection about Imam Ahmad Raza's commentary to the Quranic verse “And We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things” (16:89) in which the Quran was described as *tibyan li kull shay*, technically defined by the latter as “a perspicuous exposition of all things brought into existence in which there is not a single iota of ambiguity”. Deobandis claim that this is *untrue* and the verse is *restricted* to specific meanings. I advise the sincere reader to first study Imam Ahmad Raza's commentary to this verse in my article - “Knowledge of the Unseen Theology: Arguments on the Scope of Prophetic Knowledge” - under the subheading “Imam Ahmad Raza's exceptional use of Quranic evidence” (p. 9-11) and then carefully evaluate the Deobandi objections with my counterarguments allowing the evidences and reasoning guide the learned sincere seeker to the inevitably correct conclusions.

My only purpose here, as a sincere student of the Islamic *ulum*, is to represent what I have found to be true and correct from the prestigious Sunni scholarly tradition and works hoping that it will lead others, including my opponents, to accept the truth when it is manifest. And Allah alone gives guidance to whoever He pleases.

Deobandi Objection:

Objecting to my argument on the all-explaining nature of the Quran in my abovementioned article (pp. 9-11), a Deobandi writes:

“1. On pages 9 – 11, he reproduces Ahmad Rida Khan's argument that Qur'an 16:89 which states the Qur'an is an explanation of all things (kull shay') is "a decisive proof that Allah gave our Messenger the knowledge of all creatures and all past and future events." He bases this on "kull" (all) being general and "shay'" meaning "things brought into existence." [I will ignore the point that if this were decisive (qat'i) in proving this claim, it contradicts his later comment that there is legitimate scope for disagreement when it comes to whether he possesses such knowledge or not, as it is disbelief to deny decisive evidence.] This tafsir, not only contradicts the exegesis of nearly all previous mufasssirin and is thus innovated, but results in a contradiction...” [End of Deobandi quote].

Answer:

The Deobandi opponent has raised three objections in this one paragraph:

- a) If the verse under discussion (Q16:89) is decisive then there is no legitimate scope for disagreement among the scholars about the vastness of the Noble Prophet's knowledge (Allah give him peace and blessings) because whoever disagrees would be in denial of a decisive proof-text (nass)
- b) Moreover, the claim of generality (umum) in this nass will contradict the exegesis of all previous mufasssirin who restrict its meaning to certain matters
- c) Lastly, there is a contradiction in holding the opinion that the Quran is an explanation of all things, which I will examine later.

By the way, these objections were answered in the two major works by Imam Ahmad Raza in Inba al-Hay anna Kalamahu al-Masun Tibyan li-Kull Shay (Arabic) and Khaalis al-I'tiqad (Urdu- it is available in Fatawa Razawiyyah vol. 29). I advise my learned readers to refer to both of these sources for detailed answers to these objections by the Imam himself. Here I shall only briefly give our replies highlighting the fallacies in the Deobandi opponent's inferences. To commence, I shall examine the first two objections.

1- Meanings of Qat'i & the Plausibility of Restriction in the General Text (aam)

1. Our Deobandi opponent's supposition that if the generality in the nass was decisive disagreement would be disbelief is an abhorrent notion. A novice in Usul al-Fiqh learns that claiming restriction (takhsis) in the generality of a nass is not disbelief and is validly warranted. I ask, is restriction (takhsis) synonymous (mutaradif) to denial (inkar) in the Deobandi madhhab? Clearly, our opponent has not understood the difference between the two. I invite my learned readers to notice this plain mistake of the Deobandi writer.
2. The term qat'i (decisive) has a different meaning in Usul al-Fiqh to that in Ilm al-Kalam. The decisiveness in a general (aam) proof-text (nass) is ijthadi and is nothing like the decisiveness of that in Kalam. Hence suggesting that if the nass was qat'i there would be no legitimate scope for disagreement is a clear indication that our opponent lacks knowledge of the difference between the two usages of the term.

كما نص عليه الإمام أحمد رضا في الفيوضات الملكية حاشية الدولة المكية ص 83 بقوله: "أقول فرق بين القطع الكلامي والقطع الأصولي أعني أصول الفقه. ألا ترى أن قطعية العام مجتهد فيه فيها فلا تكون من القطع الكلامي في شيء فليس تمسك حنفي بعموم قرآني والحكم بكونه قطعيًا في مذهبه حكماً جازماً على مراد الجليل ولا خروجاً عن حدود التأويل كما لا يخفى على كل عارف نبيل" انتهى

2- Generality of the verse (Q16:89), Scholarly Difference & Refutation of the Claim of Consensus on Restriction

1. Had this person read my article (p. 8) properly he would have realised that I summarised a discussion from Imam Kattani's Jala al-Qulub regarding the nature of proofs on the vastness of prophetic knowledge where I painstakingly showed that some of the major classical ulama used certain proofs to restrict other proofs on the generality of prophetic knowledge whereas some ulama did not whereas Imam Kattani supported the position of the latter group. Hence I illustrated that there was no consensus on the generality of evidences. As for Imam Ahmad Raza, he has not claimed consensus on the generality (umum) of this verse (16:89) in any of his works and in fact mentions, in detail, the madhhab of the ulama who claim restriction (khusus) in this verse in Khaalis al-I'tiqad and he authored an entire book examining the claim of restriction, namely, Inba al-Hay. So presenting a few statements of the ulama on the restricted meaning of this verse does not disprove our stance. In order to disprove our stance, you have to disprove our evidences and manner of inference (istidlal).

I ask the readers to consider the following: if Zayd says my view is x and gives evidence to substantiate his claim and Amr says in response 'so and so' says that y is their view, has Amr disproved Zayd's view? Every sensible reader shall agree that Amr has not refuted Zayd's view but has in fact shown that there is difference of opinion on the matter in discussion. If Amr intends to disprove Zayd's view, he has to disprove Zayd's argument. Therefore, I remind my Deobandi opponents of what I have shown in my article that there are ulama who claim generality in the evidences and there are scholars who claim restriction so what harm can our Deobandi opponents do by showing us some comments of restriction which do not prove anything except difference of opinion on this matter, something that I myself have shown is true? Our Deobandi opponents need to show how claiming generality (umum) in the texts is a fallacy and innovation- which he claims- and this can only be done if one charges all of the ulama who hold view five in Imam Kattani's categorisation of views (see p. 7 & 8 of my article) with a devastating fatwa of innovation and by refuting our methodology of inference (which I translated from Imam Ahmad Raza in my main article p. 9-11) only then will one have refuted our view.

2. As for our Deobandi opponent's claim that there is agreement of all tafsir scholars that the verse is restricted to certain matters of deen only and hence claiming its generality is innovation, it is sheer ignorance as I shall illustrate. Look at the following tafsir of Alusi under this verse (Q16:89) which is sufficient to rebuke this claim,

"And some of the ulama take the view which is in accordance with the apparent meaning of this verse without claiming restriction..." [He then

quotes statements of Imam Ibn al-Arabi, Sayyiduna Ali, Imam Suyuti and Imam Mursi, and Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud and Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them all) on the generality of this verse].

قال العلامة الألوسي في روح المعاني: "وذهب بعضهم إلى ما يقتضيه ظاهر الآية غير قائل بالتخصيص ولا بأن (كل) للتكثير فقال: ما من شيء من أمر الدين والدنيا إلا يمكن استخراجها من القرآن وقد بين فيه كل شيء بياناً بليغاً واعتبر في ذلك مراتب الناس في الفهم فرب شيء يكون بياناً بليغاً لقوم ولا يكون كذلك لآخرين بل قد يكون بياناً لواحد ولا يكون بياناً لآخر فضلاً عن كون البيان بليغاً أو غير بليغ (إلى أن قال) ويؤيد القول بالظاهر أن الشيخ الأكبر قدس سره وغيره قد استخرجوا منه ما لا يحصى من الحوادث الكونية. وقد رأيت جدولاً حرفياً منسوباً إلى الشيخ كتب عليه أنه يعرف منه حوادث أهل المحشر، وآخر كتب عليه أنه يعرف منه حوادث أهل الجنة، وآخر كتب عليه أنه يعرف منه حوادث أهل النار وكل ذلك على ما يزعمون مستخرج من الكتاب الكريم، ومثل هذا الجفر الجامع المنسوب إلى أمير المؤمنين علي كرم الله تعالى وجهه فإنهم قالوا: إنه جامع لما شاء الله تعالى من الحوادث الكونية وهو أيضاً مستخرج من القرآن العظيم. وقد نقل الجلال السيوطي عن المرسي أنه قال: جمع القرآن علوم الأولين والآخرين بحيث لم يحط بها علماً حقيقة إلا المتكلم به ثم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خلا ما استأثر به سبحانه ثم ورث عنه معظم ذلك سادات الصحابة وأعلامهم مثل الخلفاء الأربعة ومثل ابن عباس وابن مسعود حتى قال الأول: لو ضاع لي عقل بعير لوجدته في كتاب الله تعالى ثم ورث عنهم التابعون لهم بإحسان ثم تقاصرت لهمم وفترت العزائم" الخ

3- Imam Kattani's Position on the Generality of the Verse (16:89)

Our Deobandi opponent claims regarding Imam Ahmad Raza's conclusion that he derived from this verse is an *innovation* and the Deobandi did not realise that this is the view of numerous awliya and ulama as partially shown by Imam Alusi above. Imam Kattani detailed the view of these major scholars extensively in Jala al-Qulub (v. 1, p. 285-287) that I pointed to on pp.7-8 of my article. After quoting statements of the blessed companions on the generality of the verse (16:89) and then statements of the ulama and awliya Imam Kattani says (v.1, p. 287),

"It is on the basis of this enormous collection (of knowledge) that it (i.e. Quran) is called Quran from the word *qur'un* which means collection and that is because the Quran is not except the *outward* knowledge of Allah Almighty [i.e. only that which Allah has exposed upon His creation] and there is no doubt that His knowledge encompasses every whole and particular so the Quran also encompasses these because it is Allah's revealed command (amr) as He Almighty says "This is the command of Allah that He has sent down to you" (Talaq: 5) and His command is His attribute that encompasses all things and is established upon all things, according to what some of the major ulama have mentioned so grasp this. This and evidences of this kind illustrate the point of perfection of our Prophet's knowledge, Allah give him peace and blessings, that not a single creature from the entire creation has acquired, in fact, no one ever smelt its fragrance and will never be able to smell its fragrance eternally."

قال الإمام محمد بن جعفر الكتاني: "قلت والكتاب في قوله ما فرطنا في الكتاب من شيء هو القرآن وقيل اللوح المحفوظ فكل ما يطلق عليه اسم شيء فهو القرآن إما صريحاً وإما إشارة إما ضمناً وإما التزاماً والشيء أعم من الموجود والمعدوم عند أهل اللغة وقد قال تعالى أيضاً ونزلنا عليك الكتاب تبييناً لكل شيء وقال ابن مسعود فيما أخرجه سعيد بن منصور عنه من أراد العلم فعليه بالقرآن فإن فيه علم الأولين والآخرين (إلى أن قال) ولأجل هذا الجمع العظيم سمي قرآناً من القرء الذي هو الجمع وذلك أن القرآن ليس إلا ظاهر علم الله تعالى ولا ريب أن علمه تعالى محيط بالجزئيات والكليات فالقرآن محيط بها أيضاً فإنه أمر الله المنزل كما قال

تعالى ذلك أمر الله أنزله إليكم وأمره صفته المحيطة بكل شيء القائمة على كل شيء فافهم هكذا قال بعض الاكابر ومن هذا ونحوه تطلع على نقطة كماله صلى الله عليه وسلم من العلوم التي ما نالها أحد من الخلائق أجمعين بل ولا شم لها رائحة ولا يشمها أبد الابدين".

This comment of Imam Kattani categorically establishes the point that there is no consensus on restriction in the verse (Q16:89) or similar verses on the vastness of the Quranic meanings but in fact major ulama have claimed generality in the verses. The following words of Imam Kattani in Jala al-Qulub (v.1, p. 148) are also an excellent reminder for our Deobandi opponents that Imam Ahmad Raza is not alone in claiming generality (umum) in the knowledge of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) regarding things brought into existence,

"There is a category (of proofs) that establishes as a whole that he (i.e. Prophet) Allah give him peace and blessings has knowledge of all hidden matters [i.e. of this world] fully and completely, and he is the most learned about every matter of the past, present and future in the general and absolute sense, and [this category of proofs establishes] his awareness of the higher and lower worlds whether it is paradise or hell, the throne or the land, the heavens or the earth and beyond to all forms of creation and things present in the width or height of creation".

قال الإمام محمد ابن جعفر الكتاني في جلاء القلوب: "وقسم يفيد بمجموعه علمه صلى الله عليه وسلم بجميع المخبات شمولاً واستغراقاً، وأنه أعلم بكل ما مضى منها أو حضر أو يأتي عموماً وإطلاقاءً، وإطلاعه على العالم العلوي والسفلي جنة ونارا وعرشاً وفرشاً وسماء وأرضاً وغيرها من جميع الخلائق والحضرات طولاً وعرضاً".

The following words of Imam Kattani (v.1, p. 201) regarding the strength of the proofs for the generality of the Noble Prophet's knowledge (Allah give him peace and blessings) are also a reminder for our Deobandi opponent who claims scholarly consensus on the restricted meaning and charges those who claim generality with innovation,

"And there is a group [of Ahl al-Sunnah ulama] that asserts, taking as evidence the general evidences mentioned in category three, he (i.e. the Prophet), upon him peace and blessings, did not leave this world until Allah informed him of the five matters of the unseen and the [reality] soul and all other matters befitting his honour and greatness that he kept obscure from him or that he concealed from him. This is the madhhab of the muhaqqiqeen (specialists) among the ulama and many men of speciality and awliya strongly upheld this opinion. This is the accurate view about which no fair-minded person can have doubt and none other than someone laggard and deliberately oblivious shall disagree after having read its evidences in this risalah".

قال الإمام محمد ابن جعفر الكتاني: "وفرقة تقول إنه عليه الصلوة والسلام لم يخرج من الدنيا حتى أطلعه الله عليهما (يعني الخمس والروح) وعلى غيرهما من كل ما أبهمه عنه أو أخفاه من كل ما ينبغي لمثله ويليق بعزته وعلاه أخذاً بالعمومات الآتية في القسم الثالث وهذا هو مذهب المحققين من العلماء وجزم به كثير من أرباب الخصوصية والأولياء وهو الحق الذي لا مرية فيه لمنصف ولا يعدل عنه بعد الوقوف على ما في هذه الرسالة إلا متوان أو مستغفل" اهـ

Now, our Deobandi opponent's labelling everyone who differs with him on the meaning of the verse (Q16:89) as innovators disparages the position of learned major Sunni awliya (saints) and muhaqqiqeen (specialists) from among the most learned esteemed 'ulama including the highly venerable Imam Kattani! When will the Deobandis refrain from repugnant fatwas of innovation on the major scholars of this ummah? It is about time that they realise the implications of these knee-jerk fatwas.

4- Scholarly Analysis of the Tafsir Statements Quoted by Our Deobandi Opponent to Show Restriction in the Verse (16:89)

Now I shall examine our Deobandi opponent's quoted tafsirs on the specific meanings of the verse "and we revealed the book upon you as a clear explanation of all things" (16:89). What has been presented from the tafsirs by the Deobandi opponent is merely an explanation (bayan/tansis) of the meaning *shay* (literally "thing") and by this he claimed it only refers to specific meanings mentioned by the mufasssirun. For example he attempts to restrict the meaning of 'shay' by quoting, "things which mankind are in need of for their religious affairs", "of what is lawful and unlawful" and "what is commanded and forbidden".

I invite our Deobandi opponents, if they are sincere students of knowledge, to read, with an open mind the most detailed penetrating scholarly analysis available on this specific topic between two covers collating and then examining all the main Sunni evidences in Arabic in four hundred and fifty pages by Imam Ahmad Raza titled *Inba al-Hay*. I advise they sit in isolation and read it carefully and then they will find that it has given every notable answer to their confusions and objections. It is a full examination of the tampered Ghayat al-Ma'mul attributed to Mufti Barzanji on this very issue which seems to be the source of our Deobandi opponent's argument. Here I shall present a glimpse of some of the arguments from *Inba al-Hay* in response and I urge the readers to study the book for the full discussions and evidences which is by far superior to what I mention here. In this work, Imam Ahmad Raza first establishes the *generality* of this Quranic verse (16:89), then examines the claim of *restriction* and finally ends it with a splendid section, perhaps the largest from p.249 to p.446 explaining every evidence Deobandi opponents use from the Qur'an and Hadith to diminish the generality of the Prophetic knowledge which he titled فصل في رد كل ما تشبثوا به لنقض عموم علمه صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Firstly, Imam Ahmad Raza shows that a large number of scholars agree with the generality (umum) of this verse including some major Sahabah and Tabi'un and then he highlights that there are a few who explicitly disagree on its generality (umum) and they are some of the later scholars (muta'akhirun) (see p. 112 of *Inba al-Hay*). He eradicates the false notion that there is agreement of the mufasssirun on restriction (khusus) in this verse (Q16:89) in four lengthy sections (fusul) spread over ninety pages (from p. 21 to 111) quoting major classical tafsirs, statements of the Companions and ulama in generations later offering invaluable scholarly analysis. He illustrates that whatever the mufasssirun have said in explanation of the word *shay* (some of which our opponent quoted) does not restrict (takhsis) the word *shay* but it is a mere explanation and elaboration لان التخصيص اي تخصيص شيء بالبيان لا يدل على التخصيص كما في كتب الأصول. A student of Usul al-Fiqh knows that explanation of a word by one particular meaning does not restrict the word to that one meaning. I urge you particularly study مناشي تخصيص شيء بالذكر pp. 112 to 115 of *Inba al-Hay* for this

argument. If expressing a tafsir of a word by a particular meaning (tansis) restricts the word then the commentaries our opponent presented have various wordings such that “things which mankind are in need of for their religious affairs” is more general than “what is lawful and unlawful”. Hence these meanings would contradict each other as such that only one tafsir would be valid and not the other but even our opponents would agree that these tafsirs (that are being used to claim restriction), despite giving different meanings, are not in conflict but rather the word *shay* refers to all of them altogether. It would be ignorance to claim that only one Quranic tafsir is valid and the rest invalid because all of the various meanings of a verse constitute sound evidence (See discussion titled *القرآن ذو وجوه وحجة بجميع وجوهه* p. 115-118 of Inba al-Hay for this argument). Hence, the tafsirs our opponent quotes do not restrict the word *shay* rather they are explanations, each one of them is sound and this word gathers all of the variant meanings.

Once this is understood and our principle established that *tafsir statements merely explain a Qur’anic word and do not restrict its meaning*, it becomes easier to understand that those who claim restriction (khusus) in this verse are those mufasssirun who explicitly mention this verse is restricted (*makhsus*) or deny its generality (umum) and not anyone who singles out one or two meanings of the word *shay* in its tafsir. Therefore our Deobandi opponent is inaccurate in his assumption that all classical tafsirs disagree with Imam Ahmad Raza's commentary on the basis that they give specific explanations to this verse. Imam Ahmad Raza masterfully explains why the mufasssirun prefer mentioning specific meanings to verses over others giving more than twenty reasons with examples on p. 113-115.

Imam Ahmad Raza then examines that those few mufasssirun who claim restriction (khusus) in this verse such as Imam al-Razi (whom our opponent quotes), have in fact established generality (umum) in their comments without noticing (see pp. 125- 132 for the detailed discussion with examples under the subheading *فصل قائلو الخصوص قد اعترفوا بالعموم وإن لم ينتبهوا له*). As for the question *if the Quran is a complete exposition of everything then why is it that we do not find everything explicitly mentioned in it?* Imam Ahmad Raza responds that the Qur’an is a clear exposition for all things brought into existence for only the Noble Prophet of this ummah (Allah give him peace and blessings) and as for people they reach its depth at varying levels. See pp. 135-185 of Inba al-Hay for this argument under the subheading *فصل ليس القرآن تبياناً لكل شيء للأمة بل لنبيها صلى الله عليه وسلم*.

Imam Ahmad Raza continues to masterfully illustrate, in a separate section starting at p. 187 to p. 205 titled *فصل في تفليس زعم التخصيص وأنه لا يندفع به المحذور أصلاً*, that what led some exegetes who claim restriction (khusus) in this verse to this claim was an inaccurate notion and the problem they attempted to overcome by restricting the verse to specific matters did not avert even after restricting the verse so the claim of restriction was not the solution in the first place. In short, these mufasssirun attempted to explain how the Quran was a clear exposition of everything for humans but there was a problem: *many matters were not explicitly dealt with in the Quran* hence why the mufasssirun claimed restriction. Imam Ahmad Raza replied showing that even after restricting this verse to matters of the Deen, the problem was not solved because numerous matters of the Deen were not found in the Qur’an. *These exegetes then split in to two groups*, those that make reference to sunnah, consensus and qiyas and claim that the Qur’an makes reference to these three sources and whatever is established by

means of these is a part of the exposition of the Qur'an whereas others deny the reference to qiyas. Imam Ahmad Raza examines both views and raises ten notably challenging objections to the claim that the Quran remains a clear exposition (tibyan) even by means of reference (ihalah) in a discussion under the subheading مطلب الكلام على إبطال الإحتيال بالإحالة (pp. 198-201). He analyses the claim of restriction, in nineteen lengthy discussions over forty pages (pp. 188-231), concluding that this is inaccurate and the appropriate solution to overcome the objection that everything is not explicitly mentioned in the Quran is to assert that it is a clear exposition of all things, in its wording and meaning, only for the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) and not for his ummah.

This was a brief description of Imam Ahmad Raza's examination of those exegetes who claimed khusus in the word *shay* in the verse (Q16:89) but believed the word "kull" was on its original haqiqi meaning i.e. generality (ihatah wa ta'mim). However there was an odd opinion that shay is not restricted (makhsus) however the word "kull" was not in its original meaning, but was for takthir and amplification. Imam Ahmad Raza also highlighted the fallacy of this argument on pp. 203-205. In summary, Imam Ahmad Raza Khan held and supported the view of generality in the meaning of this verse (Q16:89) which was the view of many major ulama and Imam Kattani too, and he furnished a complete rebuttal of the tampered Ghayat al-Ma'mul illustrating that the view on restriction (khusus) in the meaning of this verse was problematic. He illustrated however, that claiming restriction in the verse does not take one out of the Ahl al-Sunnah and there was no consensus on the generality of the meaning in the verse, both of these claims we have seen above are true. Whereas, our Deobandi opponents are untrue in their claim of agreement on restriction in this verse (16:89) and are seriously impetuous to have claimed that holding generality in the verse is innovation for they did not look at the major ulama who hold this view. The fallacies of both of these notions have now been uncovered, Alhamdulillah.

5- Does the Claim of Generality in the Verse (Q16:89) Lead to a Contradiction?

Now I shall examine the objection that there is a contradiction in Imam Ahmad Raza's view that the Qur'an is an explanation of all things. Our opponent asserts,

"This tafsir, not only contradicts the exegesis of nearly all previous mufasssirin and is thus innovated, but results in a contradiction: On p. 6 he says no prophet was granted the knowledge the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) was granted and he says later that he is the most knowledgeable of all creation. However, Qur'an 6:154 and 7:145 says Musa was given tablets which was an "explanation of all things" (tafsilan li kulli shay), using the exact words (kull shay') as 16:89. This means Musa ('alayhi salam) also had the same knowledge as the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam). Qur'an 17:12 says "all things" were explained to humanity. Qur'an 18:84 says Dhu al-Qarnayn was given a "means" to all things; "means" according to the Salaf meant "knowledge" ('ilm) – see Tabari's tafsir on the verse. Hence, if based on the words "all things" in 16:89, it is determined the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) had complete knowledge of all created things, this is also established for Musa, Dhu al-Qarnayn, and all humanity."

Our opponent holds the view that both the quoted verses about the Quran and Torah are restricted (makhsus) thus why he raised the objection of contradiction. The readers must bear in mind that this objection is not only directed towards Imam Ahmad Raza's claim of generality in the Quranic proof but also targets Imam Kattani and the major awliya and muhaqqiqeen ulama he quotes who hold the same view. Below is my examination of the issue, by the aid of Allah Most High:

- a) I ask my readers to consider my following objection: the narration of Ibn Abi Hatim from Imam Mujahid (whom our opponent quoted in order to restrict the verse (16:89) about the Quran), the student of Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him), who said "when Musa placed the tablets the *tafsil* left and guidance and mercy remained" أخرج ابن أبي حاتم عن مجاهد: لما ألقى موسى الألواح بقي الهدى which plainly shows that the Quranic verse (6:154) about the Torah is on its ostensible general meaning. Now, our opponent falls into a contradiction: if the word *tafsil* in the verse refers to only matters of the deen such as injunctions and prohibitions (*amr wa nahy*) as our opponent claims then what does this *tafsir* of Imam Mujahid mean? It would mean that *amr* and *nahy* or matters of the faith left and all that remained is mercy and guidance whereas it is illogical to assert that guidance and mercy remained without laws and surely our opponent does not uphold this to be true but this is the unavoidable outcome of his restriction (*takhsis*) in the meaning of the verse! In light of this *tafsir*, our opponent must accept that *tafsil* in this verse refers to explanation of all things which was removed from the Torah when Sayyiduna Musa, upon him peace and blessings, placed it down and *amr* and *nahy* remained as mercy and guidance. Therefore when there is no restriction here about the Torah, in light of the above, what prevents generality in the verse (Q16:89) about the Quran?
- b) If we accept that *tafsil li kull shay* in (Q6: 154) is restricted on the basis of some evidence and hence the Torah did not contain knowledge of all things brought into existence for Sayyiduna Kaleemullah Musa, upon him peace, how would this entail restriction in the verse (Q18:69) about the Qur'an being an explanation of all things for Sayyiduna Habeebullah Muhammad, Allah give him peace and blessings? Restriction of a word in one place with proof does not entail restriction in another without proof. This is also our reply to the other two verses he quotes.

Now I shall examine our Deobandi opponent's claim that if both the Quran and Torah are an explanation of all things, then both our Prophet and Prophet Musa (Allah give both peace and blessings) would be equal in knowledge, a view conflicting with ours but entailed by our argument, hence by this he claims that our claim of generality (*umum*) is incorrect in the verse (16:89).

- 1) This objection, that if generality in the verses is claimed a contradiction is resulted, rises for not knowing or properly understanding Imam Ahmad Raza's view on our Noble Prophet's (Allah give him peace and blessings) vast knowledge. His view is that it encompasses knowledge about everything brought into existence (*mawjudat/hawadith*) which includes every detail inscribed in the Preserved Tablet and Sacred Pen. However, knowledge of all things brought into existence is confined between the boundaries of the first

day and last day and the Preserved Tablet does not include details (tafasil) of the hereafter as it only contains knowledge of all things in the borders of the beginning of creation to the end of creation. Nor does the Preserved Tablet contain every detail of infinite (ghayr mutanahi) knowledge such as the reality of Allah's Essence and His attributes. Hence, "explanation of all things" in this verse (Q16:89) refers to this very specific meaning which is also expressed as "ma-kana wa ma-yakun" as explained by Imam Ahmad Raza in all of his works on this subject.

Now, here is the central point: the knowledge of things inscribed on the Preserved Tablet is a portion of the knowledge of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) and his knowledge is greater than it. Our Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) is always increasing in his knowledge such that there will never be an end to him acquiring knowledge. This is what Imam Ahmad Raza technically calls "ilm la-yaqif inda hadd" علم لا يقف عند حد (al-Dawlah al-Makkiyyah, p. 42-43, 133). Such knowledge cannot be the attribute of Allah Most High because His knowledge encompasses (muheet) every detail of all infinite matters all at once and it does not change and increase. This means that knowledge of all things inscribed on the Tablet (also expressed as "ma- kana wa ma-yakun", literally what occurred in the past and what shall happen in the future and also expressed as "ilm kull shay" i.e. knowledge of all things brought into existence) is only a portion of our Noble Prophet's (Allah give him peace and blessings) immense knowledge. It seems appropriate to reproduce Imam Ahmad Raza's comments from al-Dawlah al-Makkiyyah (p.65-67) on this claim here:

"As for us the people of truth [the Ahl al-Sunnah] we know, by the grace of Allah, that what we mentioned about the details of all things in the past from the first day [of creation] and things to occur in the future till the last day are not in relation to our Prophet's knowledge, Allah give him peace and blessings, except a small thing. The evidence to this is Allah Almighty's declaration "and He taught you what you did not know and great is Allah's grace upon you". I say: Allah, Glorious is He, mentions His grace He bestowed upon His Beloved, Allah give him peace and blessings, that is teaching him what he did not previously know and then ended mentioning the grace by a word that is indicative of the great grace being immense and the major favour being vast in the words "*and great is Allah's grace upon you*". It is to be understood that [knowledge of] what happened in the past and what is to happen in the future in the abovementioned meaning, all of which is established in the Preserved Tablet, each part of it in full detail, all of this is not except [related to the] world (dunya). Surely the hereafter is after the Last Day and beyond both is the Essence of Allah Almighty and His Divine Attributes that neither the Sacred Pen nor the Tablet can include. And about the world (dunya) Allah Almighty says "*say: the provision of this world is little*". So how can something which Allah describes as little be compared to that which He describes as great and extols its significance whereas the Prophet's knowledge, Allah give him peace and blessings, extends to matters beyond the Last Day such as [details of] resurrection, gathering and reckoning, the details of reward and punishment to the point that people shall enter their abodes in paradise and hellfire and things beyond this which Allah chooses to teach him?

The Prophet, Allah give him peace and blessings, knows such a large extent about Allah's Essence and Divine Attributes that none besides Allah Himself can

encapsulate it Who bestowed these gifts [of knowledge] upon His Chosen One (al-Mustafa), Allah give him peace and blessings. Therefore, the knowledge of the past and future (ilm ma-kana wa ma-yakun) that is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet is not except a portion of our Prophet's knowledge, Allah give him peace and blessings, and it is not true that the mentioned specified amount [i.e. knowledge of things brought into existence inscribed on the Sacred Tablet and Pen] exceeds his knowledge or that it is not acquired by him. This is why the honourable Imam al-Busiri, May Allah Almighty extend his blessings to us, said [in al-Qasidah al-Burda an acclaimed and globally accepted scholarly ode in the honour of the Holy Prophet that is sang in every Muslim country on the planet]

فإن من جودك الدنيا و ضررتها و من علومك علم اللوح و القلم

“For verily amongst your bounties is this world, and the hereafter. And part of your knowledge is knowledge of the Preserved Tablet and the Pen.”

So he [Imam Busiri] brought the particle “min” [in the Arabic which literally means from] to denote partialness [that translates as: “and part of your knowledge”] and by doing this he tossed mountains of anger and rage on every sick heart so “Say: die in your rage, indeed, Allah is knowing of that within the breasts”. In al-Zubdah Sharh al-Burdah, Allamah Ali Qari said in the explanation of the mentioned verse: “what is intended by the [term] “knowledge of the Preserved Tablet” is all Divine inscriptions on it and unseen forms and by the [term] “knowledge of the Sacred Pen” is whatever is inscribed in it by the choice of Allah and the possession is due to the close relation. The reason that their [i.e. Tablet and Pen] knowledge is a portion from his [i.e. Prophet's] knowledge, Allah give him peace and blessings, is because his [Prophet's] knowledge is several kinds, wholes and particulars, realities and innermost details, recognitions and knowledge relating to the Divine Essence and Attributes and the knowledge of these [Preserved Tablet and Pen] is not except a line from the lines of his knowledge and a river from the oceans of his knowledge. In addition to this, their [i.e. Tablet and Pen] knowledge is due to the blessings of his noble existence, Allah give him peace and blessings” [End of Mulla Ali Qari's commentary]. Now the truth has become manifest, lies have vanished and the people of falsehood have been devastated. And all praise is for Allah the Cherisher of the Worlds.” [End of Imam Ahmad Raza's passage].

قال الإمام أحمد رضا خان في الدولة المكية: "نحن معاشر أهل الحق فقد علمنا و لله الحمد أن هذا الذي ذكرنا من تفاصيل كل ما كان من أول يوم و ما يكون إلى آخر الأيام، ليس بجنب علوم نبينا صلى الله و علمك ما لم تكن تعلم و كان فضل الله عليك عظيما تعالى عليه وسلم إلا شيئا قليلا. و الدليل عليه قوله عز وجل (4/113)

أقول: امتن الله سبحانه و تعالى في هذه الآية على حبيبه صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم بتعليمه ما لم يعلم و ختم الامتنان بما دل على عظم تلك المنة العظمى، و فخامة هذه النعمة الكبرى، فقال و كان فضل الله عليك عظيما

و معلوم أن ما كان و ما يكون بالمعنى المذكور المثبت كله فردا فردا تفصيلا تاما في اللوح المحفوظ ليس إلا الدنيا، فإن الآخرة بعد اليوم الآخر و ورائهما ذات الله سبحانه و تعالى و صفاته التي لا يسعها لوح و لا قلم. و قد قال الله تعالى في الدنيا (4/77) قل متاع الدنيا قليل فأنى يقع ما استقله الله سبحانه تعالى مما استعظمه و كبر شأنه مع أن علمه صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم قد تعدى إلى ما بعد اليوم الآخر من الحشر و النشر و الحساب و الكتاب، و تفاصيل ما هنالك من الثواب و العقاب، إلى نزول الناس منازلهم من الجنة و النار إلى ما بعد ذلك مما شاء الله تعالى إعلامه.

وقد علم صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم من ذاته عز وجل وصفاته ما لا يحصى قدره إلا الله، المانح تلك العطايا لمصطفاه، صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم، فإذا ليس علم ما كان وما يكون المثبت في اللوح المحفوظ إلا بعضا من علوم حبيبنا صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم فضلا عن أن يتكثر عليه، فلا يحصل لديه، ولهذا قال الإمام الألبوسي نفعنا الله تعالى ببركاته
فإن من جودك الدنيا وضررتها و من علومك علم اللوح و القلم
فأتى بمن التبويض، و ألقى جبال الغيظ و الغنظ على كل قلب مريض، قل موتوا بغيظكم إن الله عليم بذات الصدور.

قال العلامة علي القاري في الزبدة شرح البردة تحت البيت المذكور توضيحه:
أن المراد بعلم اللوح ما أثبت فيه من النقوش القدسية والصور الغيبية، و بعلم القلم ما أثبت فيه كما شاء و الإضافة لأدنى ملابسة، و كون علمهما من علومه صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم. إن علومه تتنوع إلى الكليات و الجزئيات، و حقائق و دقائق، و عوارف و معارف تتعلق بالذات و الصفات و علمهما إنما يكون سطرا من سطور علمه و نهرا من بحور علمه. ثم هذا هو من بركة وجوده صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم.
فالآن حصص الحق و زالت الميون، و خسر هنالك المبطلون، و الحمد لله رب العالمين." انتهى

From this excellent commentary to the Quranic verse “and He taught you what you did not know and great is Allah’s grace upon you” (4:113) we learn that the Noble Prophet’s (Allah give him peace and blessings) knowledge of “all things brought into existence” is not the overall of his knowledge, because “all things brought into existence” are but worldly things which in the sight of Allah are little yet His grace of knowledge upon His Beloved Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) is enormous. Sound hadith evidences also support the claim that our Noble Prophet’s knowledge (Allah give him peace and blessings) includes certain details of the hereafter and that his knowledge shall increase about Allah Most High’s Attributes (an infinite issue) on the Day of Judgement. This view of Imam Ahmad Raza is in accordance with Imam al-Busiri’s quoted verse in the Burdah and its commentaries by Mulla Ali Qari & Imam Bajuri that can be checked by the Arabic reader.

Imam Ahmad Raza quotes Bahr al-Ulum Abd al-Ali Lakhnouwi (in al-Fuyudat al-Malakiyyah, p. 66), under the above quoted passage, who made a similar point in praise of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) in the khutbah of his Hashiyah of Sharh al-Sayyid Zahid on al-Risalah al-Qutbiyyah,

“He (i.e. Allah) taught him some knowledge that the Loftiest Pen does not include and the fully detailed Tablet does not encompass. From the beginning of time none like him has been born and never shall be born till eternity and therefore there is no one of his match in the heavens or the earth”.

"وقال المولى ملك العلماء بحر العلوم أبو العياش عبد العلي محمد اللكنوي قدس سره في خطبة حواشيه على شرح السيد زاهد للرسالة القطبية في التصور والتصديق، يمدح نبينا صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم بما نصه: و علمه علوما بعضها ما احتوى عليه القلم الأعلى و ما استطاع (بتضمين معنى قدر 12) على (ما موصولة عطا على الخبر و هو ما احتوى أو نافية عطا على الجملة صفة آخر لعلوما و هذا أولى لتأنيث الضمير 12) أحاطتها اللوح الأوفى، لم يلد الدهر مثله من الأزل و لم يولد إلى الأبد، فليس له في السماوات و الأرض كفوا أحد". انتهى

It is impossible that every detail about Allah’s Essence and Divine Attributes be recorded in the Preserved Tablet because they are infinite matters and this is finite, and something finite cannot encapsulate something infinite. Yet however, our Prophet’s (Allah give him peace and blessings) knowledge shall increase about the Divine Attributes of Allah Most High even on the Day of Judgement. Regarding the hadith of intercession wherein the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and

blessings) asserts he will praise Allah on the Day of Judgement with words Allah will teach him in the hereafter, Imam Ahmad Raza says (al-Dawlah, p. 84),

“It is ignorance of the Wahhabis to use the Hadith of intercession “then I shall lift my head and praise my Lord with praise and honour that He shall teach me” as the praise will be about His Excellent Attributes so the hadith signifies that some of the Divine Attributes will be shown to him on that day which he is not aware of till now [i.e. in this world] yet this [objection] does not even come near the place of disagreement as we have informed you that his [i.e. Prophet’s] knowledge, Allah give him peace and blessings, about the Divine Essence and Attributes does not at all encompass any of them because of the impossibility of something finite encompassing another that is infinite. Therefore, his knowledge, Allah give him peace and blessings, shall continuously increase forever with new knowledge about the Essence of Allah and His Divine Attributes and it shall never completely reach their reality and neither encompass them because what he shall acquire will always be finite and what remains [i.e. what he shall not know] will always be infinite. Hence there is no proof in this hadith against our claim and neither does it [the prophetic knowledge] encompass all of the reality of Divine Attributes so whoever does not understand this can utter what he pleases”.

قال الإمام أحمد رضا خان في الفيوضات الملكية حاشية الدولة المكية: "من جهل الوهابية التمسك ههنا بحديث الشفاعة فارفع رأسي فأنتني على ربي بثناء و تحميد يعلمنيه فإن الحمد و الثناء عليه تعالى بأوصافه الجميل فيفيد الحديث أنه إذ ذاك ينكشف عليه صلى الله تعالى عليه و سلم من صفاته تعالى ما لا يعلمه الآن و هذا لا يمس محل النزاع فقد أذنك أن علمه صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم ذاته و صفاته لن يحيطن بشئ منهما أبدا لاستحالة إحاطة المتناهي بما لا يتناهي فيزيد علمه صلى الله تعالى عليه و سلم إلى أبد الأباد علوما جديدة بذاته تعالى و لا يبلغ الكنه و الإحاطة أبدا فإن الحاصل أبدا متناه والباقي أبدا غير متناه، فلا فيه خلاف لما ادعينا ولا إحاطة بكنه صفات الله ولكن من لم يفهم فليفه بما فاه" انتهى

In answer to question four in al-Dawlah al-Makkiyyah (p. 133), Imam Ahmad Raza gives a succinct definition of his position on the nature of the Noble Prophet’s (Allah give him peace and blessings) ever-increasing vast knowledge. Below are the question and its answer:

“The fourth question: does his knowledge, Allah give him peace and blessings, have a beginning and an end and is it limited by a limitation or not? I say, its reply is as follows: as for a beginning, then of course because the knowledge of creation is not possible except by being contingent and as for an end if this means that his knowledge has a quantity that exists in every era and its number is known by Allah though no human or angel can enumerate it, then this is correct without doubt. If it [i.e. end] means that his knowledge stops at one point and does not increase beyond it then this is incorrect and Allah does not like this [for his Beloved] rather our Beloved Prophet, Allah give him peace and blessings, shall always increase in eternity in his knowledge about his Lord and His Divine Attributes, Exalted is He. And we have explained this in detail in the first discussion”.

قال الإمام أحمد رضا خان في الدولة المكية: "السؤال الرابع: هل علمه صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم له ابتداء وانتهاء و محدود بحد أم ليس كذلك؟

أقول: الجواب: أما الابتداء فنعم، لأن علم الخلق لا يمكن إلا حادثاً و أما الانتهاء فإن أريد به أن يكون القدر الموجود من علومه صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم في كل زمان معروضا لعدد ما في علم الله تعالى و إن لم يستطع إحصائه بشر و لا ملك، فهذا أيضا صحيح و لا شك، و إن أريد أن يقف علمه صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم عند حد لا يتعداه، فباطل و الله لا يرضاه، بل لا يزال حبيبنا صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم في أبد الأبد يترقى في علمه بر به و صفاته عز و جل، و قد فصلنا القول في ذلك كله في النظر الأول".

Now that Imam Ahmad Raza's stance on the vastness of our Noble Prophet's knowledge (Allah give him peace and blessings) is explained in more detail and hopefully understood, no fair and sane minded person will claim this position results in equalising the knowledge of our Holy Prophet to that possessed by Prophet Musa (upon both be peace and blessings) if generality is claimed in the verses as the verse about the Quran being an "explanation of all things (brought into existence)" is not the total knowledge of our Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) in light of the above. Therefore our explanation to the verse (Q16:89) does not lead to a contradiction in our position on the Prophetic Knowledge.

This position of Imam Ahmad Raza on the all explaining nature of the Quran and vastness of the Noble Prophet's Knowledge (Allah give him peace and blessings) in al-Dawlah al-Makkiyyah was supported by more than eighty major ulama of his era worldwide such as Qadi Yusuf al-Nabhani, Allamah Ameen Suwayd al-Dimashqi, Mufti Abdullah Siraj, Sayyid Alawi Bafaqih, Shaykh Umar ibn Abi Bakr Bajunayd, and several students of Shaykh Badruddin al-Hasani of Syria (may Allah have mercy on all of them). Shaykh Zamzami Kattani, a son of Imam Muhammad ibn Jafar Kattani mentioned in his *Rihlatan ila al-Hind* that his father (the author of *Jala al-Qulub*) also endorsed al-Dawlah al-Makkiyyah and supported Imam Ahmad Raza Khan on his position on the vastness of the Noble Prophet's knowledge (Allah give him peace and blessings). I showed above that Imam Kattani held the same position as Imam Ahmad Raza on the generality of the Quranic verse (16:89) in *Jala al-Qulub*.

2) Another answer to the objection of contradiction is in the tafsir of Imam Mujahid I quoted earlier where he mentioned that when Prophet Musa (upon him peace and blessings) placed the Torah tablets the tafsil (explanation of all things) vanished. This tafsir is also narrated from Ibn Abbas and Sa'eed ibn Jubayr (May Allah be pleased with both). This tafsir was mentioned by al-Tabari, Ibn Abi Hatim and al-Suyuti in al-Durr al-Manthur. The following narration of Imam al-Suyuti from Sa'eed Ibn Jubayr through Imam Mujahid shows that this view is in line with the wording of the verses,

"When Musa placed them (the tablets on the ground), the tafsil (i.e. explanation of all things) left and guidance and mercy remained and (then) he (Sa'eed Ibn Jubayr) recited "And We wrote for him on the Tablets the lesson to be drawn from all things and the explanation of all things" (7:145) and then he recited "and when the anger subsided in Moses, he took up the tablets; and in their inscription was guidance and mercy for those who are fearful of their Lord" (7:154) (after which) he (i.e. Sa'eed) said: it does not mention tafsil here (i.e. in this verse when Prophet Musa picked up the Tablets after placing them down whereas tafsil was mentioned in the first verse when the Torah was given to him)."

قال الإمام السيوطي في الدر المنثور: "وأخرج أبو عبيد وابن المنذر عن مجاهد. أن سعيد بن جبير قال: كانت الألواح من زمرد، فلما ألقاها موسى ذهب التفصيل وبقي الهدى والرحمة ، وقرأ { وكتبنا له في الألواح من كل شيء موعظة وتقصيلاً لكل شيء } وقرأ { ولما سكت عن موسى الغضب أخذ الألواح وفي نسختها هدى ورحمة } قال: ولم يذكر التفصيل ههنا".

In light of this tafsir, Prophet Musa did not acquire the explanation of all things (tafsil) because it was inscribed on the tablets that had been removed. In the case of the Quran, the demarcation being that the explanation of all things was revealed in the Quran and remained within it without omission. Also, Allah Most High *taught* the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) the Quran as mentioned explicitly with Quranic evidence "The Most Merciful taught the Quran" (55:1-2) whereas the Torah was *not taught* but given to Prophet Musa at the Mountain hence our Deobandi opponent's objection is again proven to be hollow and unsubstantiated when simply viewed against the rich Sunni intellectual tradition. However, if our Deobandi opponent obstinately refuses to accept this tafsir and wants to show that the verse about the Torah is in its general meaning and that the Torah remains an explanation of all things – because of our position on the verse (Q16:89)- in order to illustrate a contradiction then I have shown in the previous answer how a contradiction does not result simply because knowledge of all things brought into existence is not the total of our Prophet's knowledge (Allah give him peace and blessings). What I have written here guided by our vibrant intellectual tradition is sufficient for every sincere seeker in answering the objection on the contradiction, may Allah Almighty guide those lost and allow us to accept the truth when it is manifest.

6- The Noble Sahabah & the Generality of this Verse (Q16:89)

Our opponent presents a tafsir of Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that illustrates the generality of this verse and claims it is weak. He says,

"Al-Tabari also narrates from Ibn Mas'ud that he said, "Every science was revealed in this Qur'an and everything has been explained for us in the Qur'an." However the chain of this narration is weak [Al-Qasim ibn Hasan, al-Tabari's shaykh is unknown as mentioned in Mu'jam Shuyukh al-Tabari; the next narrator Husayn ibn Dawud, also called Sunayd is weak as mentioned by al-'Asqalani in al-Taqrīb and the narrator from Ibn Masud who is simply referred to as "a man" is unknown - hence, the chain is weak]. And although Ibn Kathir favoured this exegesis attributed to Ibn Mas'ud, he specifies Ibn Mas'ud's statement to mean "every beneficial knowledge" which "mankind is in need of in the affairs of the world and the religion, their livelihood and their afterlife".

Firstly, this tafsir is narrated by scholars other than al-Tabari too. Imam Kattani (p. 285) relies on this tafsir quoting Ibn Abi Hatim in addition to al-Tabari. It is a basic concept in Usul al-Hadith that if a chain is proven weak it does not ultimately weaken the wording narrated as there can be other chains to the wording too.

Secondly, there are variant tafsir wordings of Ibn Mas'ud on this verse all of which indicate generality. Imam Kattani quotes (v.1, p. 285) Sa'eed Ibn Mansur's narration from Ibn Mas'ud that "whoever intends to seek knowledge should study the Qur'an

because it contains the knowledge of the first and the last” من أراد العلم فليثور القرآن فإن فيه علم الأولين والآخرين. Imam Ahmad Raza cites the latter statement in Inba al-Hay (p. 23) from Sunan Sa’eed Ibn Mansur, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abdullah ibn Ahmad’s Zawa’id Kitab al-Zuhd, Fada’il al-Qur’an of Ibn al-Daris, al-Tabarani’s Mu’jam Kabir and Bayhaqi’s Shu’ab al-Iman as does Imam Suyuti in al-Durr al-Manthur under this verse. Ibn Abi Hatim narrates Ibn Mas’ud (Allah be pleased with him) also said “whatever hadith I relate to you, I can inform you of its confirmation from the Book of Allah Most High” (Kattani, v.1, p. 285).

Our opponent overlooked other similar statements of the Sahabah that indicate the generality and vastness of the Qur’anic meanings. Take for example the following statement of Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) who said “all knowledge is in the Quran yet the minds of men cannot reach it” and his statement “not a single bird flaps its wings except that we found it [mentioned] in the book of Allah Most High” (Kattani, p. 285). Other similar statements of the Companions were documented by Imam Ahmad Raza in Inba al-Hay pp. 22-43.

As for our opponent’s statement about al-Hafiz ibn Kathir’s preference of Ibn Mas’ud’s tafsir, its reply is as follows:

- a) Explaining some meanings of a statement is not restriction as I have shown above thus Ibn Kathir’s furnishing a specific explanation regarding the words of the Companion’s tafsir is not a *restriction* in the meaning of this verse
- b) Our opponent omitted some of the words of Ibn Kathir from in between “every beneficial knowledge” and “mankind is in need of in the affairs of the world and the religion, their livelihood and their afterlife”. However, the discerning reader can plainly ascertain that Ibn Kathir explicitly mentions “the news of the past and knowledge of the future and every halal and haram” which are words indicating the generality of this verse which our opponent did not mention. Here is the full wording [the underlined was omitted by our opponent],

”وقول ابن مسعود أعم وأشمل؛ فإن القرآن اشتمل على كل علم نافع؛ من خبر ما سبق، وعلم ما سيأتي، وكل حلال وحرام، وما الناس إليه محتاجون في أمر دنياهم ودينهم ومعاشهم ومعادهم”

- c) In fact, the portion that the Deobandi opponent presented is sufficient in showing the generality because “every beneficial knowledge” is a confirmation of generality such that no beneficial knowledge is excluded from the Quran
- d) Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud’s words are in accordance with the ostensible meaning of the Qur’anic text-proof (nass) and require no restriction
- e) Our opponent first attempts to weaken this tafsir from al-Tabari and then accepts it from Ibn Kathir showing his acceptance of it over the other tafsir, so this categorically points that Ibn Mas’ud’s tafsir is reliable.

7. Qadi Baydawi’s Quoted Commentary

Our opponent quotes Qadi Baydawi on restriction (khusus) in this verse (16:89) saying,

“Baydawi says it means “from the matters of religion in detail or in summary by giving reference to Sunnah and Qiyas”.”

However he did not study its commentary by al-Shihab al-Khafaji in which the latter rejects Qadi Baydawi’s specific meaning “from the matters of religion” saying,

“His (i.e. Baydawi’s) assertion “from the matters of religion” is a restriction that this place (i.e. verse) does not require.”

قال الشهاب الخفاجي في عناية القاضي: "وإن قوله من أمور الدين تخصيص لا يقتضيه المقام" الخ.

As for Baydawi’s statement that the Qur’an contains a summary all things (ijmal) by giving reference (ihalah) to Sunnah and Qiyas to include the knowledge of furu in the Qur’an, Imam Ahmad Raza raised ten scholarly unanswered objections to this in Inba al-Hay examining that it was against the concept of “perspicuous exposition” (tibyan) and illustrating also that some of the statements of these exegetes in fact contradicted their other statements elsewhere. See the discussion under the subheading مطلب الكلام على إبطال الإحتيال بالإحالة (pp. 198-201). Imam Ahmad Raza also gave a study to the four objections of al-Shihab al-Khafaji on this commentary of Qadi Baydawi (under Surah Yusuf: 111) under the subheading مطلب بحث الإيرادات الأربعة على البيضاوي pp. 216-217 of Inba al-Hay.

It seems that our opponent has used the tampered epistle ‘Ghayat al-Ma’mul’ attributed to Mufti Barzanji where these commentaries have been quoted. Imam Ahmad Raza gave a full analysis to this epistle’s slip-ups at the point it quoted Imams Baydawi and al-Razi, in his Inba al-Hay under the subheading مطلب إتيان ما أتت به المذكورة (pp. 228-231).

Conclusion

In summary, our Deobandi opponent’s raised objections and then his false conclusion which he offers at the end of his first objection stating “hence, the claim that this verse is a decisive proof that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) has complete knowledge of all created things and all events, *is a ridiculous claim that is at odds with all recognised tafsirs*” is audacious, disrespectful, disparaging, misleading and grossly inaccurate in light of the scholarly evidences drawn from the recognised schools of the vibrant Sunni intellectual tradition – theological, juridical and spiritual. What he unashamedly calls “ridiculous” is the maddhhab of the muhaqqiqeen (specialist) scholars spanning across the millennium and beyond as clarified by Imam Kattani and has been reaffirmed by Imam Ahmad Raza Khan’s writings with irrefutable evidences especially in *Inba al-Hayy anna Kalamahu al-Masun Tibyan Li Kull Shay* (Arabic).

It is our Deobandi opponent’s responsibility to now accept this pathway of interpretation as legitimate part of the Sunni tradition otherwise he needs to establish consensus on the erroneously claimed restriction (khusus) in the interpretation of the verse under discussion (Q16:89). Otherwise he casts grave aspersion of innovation upon those ulama from the beginning of our tradition from across the globe that have legitimately held the general meaning in interpretation of the Quranic verse. Any

contender and detractor will have to provide a coherent response to all of our presented arguments in respect of our Sunni scholarly heritage not on a partisan basis.

Now that the generality of this verse has been further established and the raised objections to it have been examined and fully answered, the following challenge of Imam Ahmad Raza stands firm against our opponents [see p. 11-12 of my “Knowledge of the Unseen Theology”],

“Lo! I adamantly invite every Wahhabi of Gangoh, Deoband and Dihli and every dweller of the woods and mountains, to collectively come together and present a single proof-text (nass) decisive in its meaning (qa’i al-dilalah) and decisively verified in its transmission (majzum al-thubut) such as a Qur’anic verse or a mass-narrated hadith that explicitly and decisively establishes that after the completion of Qur’anic revelation, a worldly event remained unknown to the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) such that he did not know it...If you cannot present such proof and we unwaveringly confirm you will fail from presenting this proof, then know that Allah will not guide any deceiver’s deceit!”

By the given ability of Allah Most High, this is my reply only to the first objection raised by Deobandi opponents upon my article “Knowledge of the Unseen Theology”. There were other ways in which I could have issued this response in light of *usul al-fiqh*, *usul al-tafsir*, *mantiq* and the classical texts but what I have presented in this short piece is sufficient to answer our Deobandi opponents. I pray to Allah Most High that He protects me from error, enables me to represent nothing except the truth and allows readers to understand and accept the maddhab of the elite Sunni ‘ulama and awliya of our tradition, ameen.

Authored by a servant & student of the Islamic sciences,

Mohammad Monawwar Ateeq

19th Shawwal 1432H

18th September 2011